The Quiet Corner

THE ARTS, DINING, ANTIQUES, ATTRACTIONS & SO MUCH MORE...

PUTNAM TRAVELER

Supporting Tourism & Communities in Northeastern, CT & Beyond...

ISSUE NO. 46 • NORTHEASTERN, CONNECTICUT

DOWNTOWN MAP INSIDE • APRIL - JUNE 2015

For an afternoon, a day, or a weekend...come and enjoy Northeastern Connecticut!

Spring has arrived! In this issue of the Putnam Traveler we want our readers to learn something new about living in and exploring northeastern Connecticut. Whether you enjoy outdoor recreational activities or motorsports, love gardening and lawncare, if you are planning a wedding or special event, OR are interested in participating in the art scene and festivities of First Fridays in Putnam - northeastern Connecticut has something for everyone! Plus highschool students who are interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics can learn all about Quinebaug Middle College, where students graduate with a highschool diploma while also acquiring college credits. Please support our advertisers, plus those we feature and tell them you found them in ***The Putnam Traveler!***

INSIDE:

Local Advertisers...Local Real Estate...Downtown Putnam Events...Discover Metzger Moto Worx...This small motorsports service and repair business is owned and operated by the Metzger family and although it is not easy to spot off of Route 44 in Putnam...they have a big following! ***First Fridays*** in downtown Putnam...kicks off in May and this year they are celebrating 'A Century of Art'...Outdoor enthusiasts and woodland lovers will stay very busy exploring ***The Yale Meyers Forest*** which covers 7,840 acres in the towns of Ashford, Eastford, Union, and Woodstock....
The Quiet Corner is a beautiful place for a ***wedding or special event***...we have featured some local businesses who offer unique and personal service to help create (and relax on) your special day...Ready to spruce up your garden? Not so fast, it takes planning, some expert advice and regular maintenance to plant and cultivate a successful garden that will thrive for years to come... we have a few suggestions and have featured experienced ***landscape designers*** who will be happy to help you love your garden again...and highschoolers who are looking to earn college credits while earning their highschool diploma now have a new option at ***Quinebaug Middle College.***

Quinebaug Middle College

Downtown Putnam & Area Maps • Businesses • Local Activities • Shopping & Events

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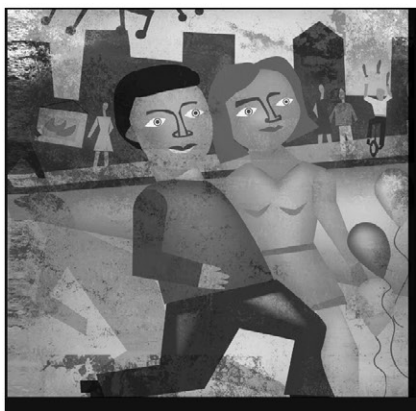

FIRST FRIDAYS
DOWNTOWN PUTNAM
MAY-OCT • Events Start at 6pm

LIVE MUSIC • ART EXHIBITS • DEMONSTRATIONS • PERFORMANCES • ART ATTACKS

Celebrates *A Century* of Art

The Putnam Business Association is busy planning for the upcoming season of First Fridays. This year's events will occur over six evenings: May 1st, June 5th, July 3rd, August 7th, September 4th, and October 2nd, and will continue the tradition of live music, community art projects, engaging performances, and a myriad of art vendors. 2015 will see a new season-long theme, A Century of Art, with each month exploring a distinct period of art in the 20th century, including: Art Nouveau, The Jazz Age, World War II & the Arts, Pop Art, Urban Art, and Digital Art. Come and join us as we celebrate:

May 1st – *Art* Nouveau

Art Nouveau or "New Art" takes inspiration from the unruly aspects of the natural world and influenced art and architecture especially in the applied arts, graphic work, and illustration. Art Nouveau can be found in the glass-work of Louis Comfort Tiffany, print work of William Bradley, and modern dance pioneer Loie Fuller.

June 5th – *The* Jazz Age

The Jazz Age was a feature of the 1920s (ending with The Great Depression) when jazz music and dance became popular. Jazz music originated mainly in New Orleans, and is/was a fusion of African and European music. In art, Art Deco was a style that combined traditional craft motifs with machine-age imagery and materials. Art Deco is often characterized by rich colors, bold geometric shapes and lavish ornamentation and can be sceen in architecture and print work of the era.

July 3rd – WWII & *The Arts*

Some of the most popular forms of entertainment during World War II were radio, film, and music. In conjunction with one another, these forms of media kept citizens entertained and informed about the country's war efforts, and motivated to contribute to the cause. It was an era when music, art, and film all came together to build morale for our country. War propaganda and pinup artwork became popular during this era and played a role in raising morale.

These events are brought to you by The Putnam Business Association. A very special "Thank You" To Metrocast for being a major sponsor! Please visit www.discoverputnam.com for more information.

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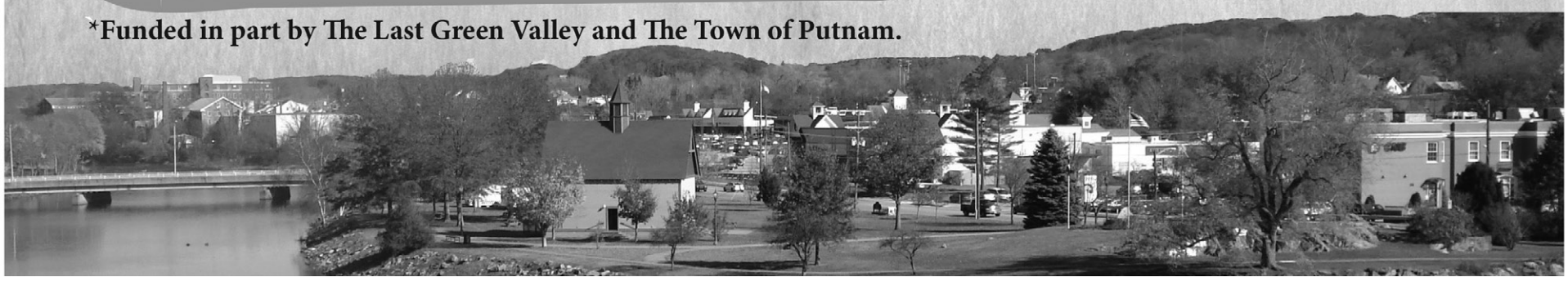
RAIN DATE: MAY 16, 2015

8:00 - 8:30 am
Gather at Rotary Park to Receive Assignments on Where to Clean
11:00 am
Return to Rotary Park
11:00 am-12:00 pm
Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

*Funded in part by The Last Green Valley and The Town of Putnam.



METZGER MOTO WORX

"All major brands, customs, cruisers, ATV, UTV, dirt bikes and watercraft. If you can ride it, we've got the WORX!"

Metzger Moto Worx is tucked away in the back of a commercial building off Route 44 across from Walmart in Putnam. This small motorsports service and repair business is owned and operated by the Metzger family. Lance Metzger, Sr. of Brooklyn, CT, worked for 15 years as service manager when the business was known as Putnam Kawasaki. In April 2014, Lance took over the business and renamed it Metzger Moto Worx. "We are the old Putnam Kawasaki with a new attitude," says Lance's wife Deb, who helps out with bookkeeping. Their children Lance, Jr. and Shyanne also help with sales and customer service. Tucker—their adorable Corgi puppy with stubby legs and oversized ears--contributes steal-your-heart marketing to this family affair.

BY CRIS CADIZ

"I always wanted to have a motorcycle shop," says Lance, who grew up riding in Colorado. "When I was a kid I had toys...dirt bikes and mini bikes and snowmobiles." After serving 5 years in the Navy as a weapons technician and more than 15 working in the motorsports business, Lance has achieved his dream.

Metzger Moto Worx can service, repair and supply parts for any small motor, including dirt bikes, road bikes, ATVs, watercraft, snowmobiles, as well as winches, snow blowers, generators, lawnmowers and more. Although the business is no longer a franchise for Kawasaki or Yamaha, they do offer sales of used bikes and ATVs as well as consignment opportunities. In addition, they offer retail sales of helmets, gloves, clothing, tires, and other riding gear. And they can get parts for pretty much anything. The Internet is a mixed blessing for this shop. While Lance can't compete with lowball prices for many things offered online, he can find scarce or uncommon parts for his customers.

The family is pleased and proud that the shop has done very well in the past seven or eight months. "We're getting a lot of old customers back," says Deb. "The shop's nice and busy," adds Lance. "I have two guys working full time in the repair shop. That's why I had to stay here and take it over... for the service. I used to treat the business like it was mine when I worked here; I tried to really take care of people. Now that it is mine, it's nice."

For a parts and service shop, the building doesn't have that oily smell one can associate with a repair business. The sales area is clean, neat and attractively displayed, thanks to Deb's creative touch and former experience in retail. The Metzgers are friendly, competent and it's clear that excellent customer service is a high priority. During the interview a woman and her daughter arrive looking for an oil filter for an ATV. After being helped by practically the whole Metzger family, the pair leaves happy with what they need and certain to return.

The whole family enjoys riding motorbikes, ATVs and snowmobiles, but sixteen-year-old Lance Junior also races them. He got his first dirt bike on Christmas Day when he was four years old and started racing when he was six. "I think the first word out of his mouth was motorcycle," laughs Deb. "The deal was he had to know how to ride a bicycle if he wanted a motorbike. So his older brother took him outside and said, 'Come on, Lance, you're going to learn how to ride a bike!'"

Lance Junior, or Little Lance as the family calls him, competes in six or seven events throughout New England during a season. He races in the JDay races, an off-road series started by young racing phenom John Day, and the New England Trail Riders Association or NETRA series. Lance, Jr. explains that the JDay races are usually "wide open trails with not as much technical stuff" while NETRA races consist of "woods, rocks, and mud." NETRA races are also called "hair scramblers" although the Metzgers aren't sure where that moniker originated. "Probably cause they scramble through the

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woods and their hair gets all messed up," offers Lance's sister, Shyanne.

The shop sponsors three or four kids to race each year, including Little Lance. The racers get the Metzger Moto Worx graphics to display on their bikes and Lance, Sr. helps them buy equipment at cost. "It's fun to go to the races. It's totally a family event," he says. "He looks forward to expanding his business by networking with the race crowd. "There's a huge following for the dirt bikes and the races, and we haven't seen any of those people in the shop in years."

Racing involves occasional crashes, but Little Lance doesn't seem to mind and his mom certainly takes them in stride. "You obviously have to be safe and start slow until you get better and better," Lance Jr. says. Deb recommends that kids start young. "They're slower when they're little," she laughs. "And it's a really good group of people to get involved with. Anyone having anything to do with motorcycles is awesome–friendly

and supportive." The best part of competition for Lance is this: "You feel great at the end of a race. You make a lot of friends and you get to ride your dirt bike, which is a lot of fun–it's all fun."

Metzger Moto Worx is located at 628C School Street, Putnam. They are open every day but Sunday. For hours and more information call 860-928-7565 (Sales and Parts) or 860-928-7840 (Service). Also visit www.metzmotoworx.com or find them on Facebook at Moto Worx.

This Year FIRST FRIDAYS *Celebrates 'A Century Of Art'*

Get out your calendar and circle the first Friday of every month from May to October. Make sure you are part of the free celebrations that turn downtown Putnam into a street festival for families, local people and tourists.

BY NANCY P. WEISS

For the 5th year, Putnam will brim with energy and activity for young and old alike when the First Friday Festivals begin in May and continue until October. The outdoor street festival appeals to tourist and locals with its innovation and variety.

This year the theme for the events, suggested by Committee Member Sara Mortensen, is: "A Century of Art." Focusing on six distinct artistic periods during the 20th century, artists, vendors and Putnam area businesses will take their cues from the images, music, history and clothing that characterized the dynamic innovations of the last century.

First Fridays Festivals are so successful that Chair Ann Monteiro says other towns have approached the planning committee to ask how they can " Putnamize" their towns.

Montero gives credit to the Putnam Business Association for their support and to the burgeoning arts community that has sprung up in downtown storefronts. Monteiro, owner of Flying Carpet and the Executive Managing Director of the Empty Spaces Project, is a Boston native, who left a corporate career to move to Woodstock, leads a committee of 15 people who come up with one creative idea after another.

"This year will be incredible. Everyone on the committee has ideas and all the ideas seem to get put into motion. Downtown Putnam is alive. People will be out on the streets. There will be music, activities and food. There is a real sense of community here," Monteiro said.

First Friday Festivals highlight local businesses and bring people into Putnam. To cover the costs of marketing the program, the committee formed a 501 ©(6) to raise funds.

An exciting new aspect will be the participation of HGTV host Deek Diedricksen and Relaxshacks.com, a proponent and builder of tiny houses, many of which are featured on his popular show. The

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houses, generally 600-900 square feet are creative, freewheeling approaches to construction for art studios, playhouses and personal sanctuaries.

Diedricksen and his crew will build a tiny art studio, approximately 8x8 inside the Empty Spaces Project on Main Street and donate it to the First Friday Festivals. The public is invited to watch the hands-on building and design project with live demonstrations.

They also plan to build a tiny yurt near the Gertrude Chandler Warner Box Car Children's Museum as a way to attract visitors to the train car that celebrates the work of the local author.

Acclaimed NYC acrylic artist, Maltee Sinanan, will also be featured on the First Friday of May. Sinanan's work dazzles with color, skill and creativity.

Dates and the themes for First Friday Festivals are:
May 2 – Song
June 6 - Dance
July 11 - Theatre (note this is 2nd Friday)
August 1 - Architecture
September 5 - Agriculture
October 3 - Folklore

First Friday is hosted by the Putnam Business Association. Galleries will feature live music, live performances and artists' talks. Visit these local galleries to join in the fun: Arts and Framing, Socher Gallery, the Empty Spaces Project Gallery, Sawmill Pottery and Silver Circle Gallery.

Go to the website: discoverputnam.org for more information on First Friday and other events.

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The Yale Myers Forest

One of the greatest assets of the Quiet Corner are our forests. Beautiful in every season, a walk (or ski/snowshoe) in the woods never fails to soothe my stressed out soul. My kids love finding boulders to climb on and old stone fences, speculating about who has come here before us. I first found the Yale Myers Forest while hiking on the Nipmuck Trail - woodland lovers, this trail is for you! While there is no maintained trail system in the Yale Forest, there is easy access to the NipMuck Trail from the Nipmuck State Forest in Union and it meanders through the Yale Forest and then continues nearly to the Massachusetts border. The Nipmuck Trail is maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) which also puts out a guidebook for those interested in hiking it. Of particular note is the woodland extravaganza which occurs every spring in the Mountain Laurel Sanctuary along the Nipmuck Trail. The Mountain Laurel, which is the Connecticut State Flower, lines the road and in the spring, they are draped in pink, red, and white blossoms, lighting up the woods from May to June - well worth the trip.

BY JENNIFER HELLER

The Quiet Corner was largely cleared for farmland from 1730 to 1850, but since then the woods have grown up in glorious abundance. However, our forests are a bit like a 1,000 piece puzzle of private landowners, with property sizes generally less than 15 acres. There are a few larger tracts of forest, on of the most interesting being the Yale Myers Forest, which covers 7,840 acres in the towns of Ashford, Eastford, Union, and Woodstock. The Yale-Myers Forest borders the Nipmuck Mountain Laurel Sanctuary and is a lovely example of forest management. This space is a unique asset to our area not only because of the size of the area and because it supplies the water supply for over 65,000 people downstream by feeding into the Natchaug Basin watershed, but also because of the work that happens there.

The Yale School of Forestry graduate students have a classroom camp in the Yale Myers Forest and are involved in a number of activities that benefit the surrounding communities, which they call the Quiet Corner Initiative. Yale Camp is a hands-on, working forest laboratory for teaching scientific research with the goal of maintaining the overall integrity and health of the forest ecosystem. The overall focus of the Quiet Corner Initiative according to Dr. Mark Ashton, Director of the Yale School Forests, is Open Space and Forest Conservation, Agriculture, and Energy Development.

One of their most locally interactive programs is the development of Land Management Plans. Often landowners are at a loss as to how to best utilize their land: this is where a team of students comes in and does a detailed assessment of the biological, social and historical attributes of the property then provides a series of recommendations on how to effectively manage that particular forest and/or open space.

Photos courtesy of Yale School of Forestry

The landowner benefits by receiving a professionally researched plan and the students benefit as they learn technical skills and gain the experience of working directly with local stakeholders. The students are able to do roughly 7 plans a year and have now built a network of 110 landowners who are collaborating with one another and with the School Forests improve the quality of land management in the area.

A class in Forest Operations goes on to assist landowners in implementing the Management Plans by

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developing sustainable timber sales, putting in sugar bush, or developing trail systems. The Yale School of Forestry also holds classes in river restoration: studying portions of the Hope River, Still River, and Bigelow Brook to assess fish habitat, erosion, and water quality. The plans the students develop have led to funding to repair culverts, restore dams and improve the watershed. So far, the students have studied 1300 acres of forestland, with a total of 8 stream studies and 14 management plans and are looking to branch out to two new areas: small-scale renewable energy, and small-scale farming.

I was overwhelmed by the amazing programs that Dr Ashton described. They hold workshops for landowners throughout the year, have environmental film viewings in the summers and every other Thursday evening during June and July they invite the public to talks given by the students or guest speakers. And an event I am definitely going to show up at this fall is their Harvest Festival, held the last weekend in September. They have demonstrations on bee-keeping, cider making, logging competitions and a live bluegrass band.

Whether your interest is in meandering in the forest or delving deeper into how to best manage the forest around you, the Yale-Myers Forest is worth exploring. **Find out more about these students and their hard work at: http://www.environment.yale.edu/forests/outreach/.**

And if you want to catch the Mountain Laurel bloom this spring you can go follow Route 89 north to the intersection of Route 89 and Route 190. Go west onto Route 190. The sanctuary entrance is a short distance from the intersection and well marked. I hope to see you there!

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Picture-Perfect Weddings in the Quiet Corner

Offering a backdrop of pastoral beauty and historic charm, the Quiet Corner is a popular wedding location for both area residents and visitors planning a destination wedding. The combination of a scenic New England country setting and top-notch venues, amenities and services makes it an ideal choice for many couples.

BY CRIS CADIZ

The area has many popular wedding venues, from country inns to historic barns and farms to grand estates. ***The Mansion at Bald Hill*** in Woodstock has hosted many weddings since it opened under the management of chefs and restaurateurs Joel Theriaque and Scott Plantier in 2008. This "summer home" built for the wealthy Bowen family in 1892 has since gained an excellent reputation as a charming restaurant and B&B. Its elegant historic setting and lovely gardens make it the perfect spot for that special day. With many successful events under their belts, it made sense for the business to expand and offer a truly grand indoor setting for larger groups.

The Mansion's new 7,500 square foot Event Center & Banquet Facility will host its first event in early May. The building was designed to complement the original historic property but offer the most modern amenities and comforts. The Ballroom can hold up to 200 guests, making it the largest indoor venue in the area. In addition, the Reception Area can accommodate 85 to 100 people standing. "We're already booking weddings, birthday parties, proms and other special events," says General Manager and Events Coordinator Janet Waterman. In addition, the facility has its own kitchen and staff so there is no need to hire a separate caterer. "We have menus for the different occasions, including weddings, which start at $50 a person and are very customizable," says Waterman. Groups of 60 or fewer can also have their event held in the original Mansion building.

Although couples can choose to have their wedding ceremony anywhere, an outdoor pavilion set in manicured gardens is a scenic setting. The patio at the new Event Center will offer an outdoor location perfect for cocktail hour. "It's a very beautiful feature with a double sided propane fireplace and a propane fire pit," Waterman explains. "There will also be two water features for picture opportunities. We've tried to incorporate as many appealing things that we could that a bride and groom would be attracted to in this new venue."

A Wedding Expo will be held at the Mansion at Bald Hill's new Event Center on May 3rd from 12-3PM and feature at least 30 different vendors. "There will be a wide variety of vendors so you can really get yourself lined up for your wedding," says Waterman. "Everything from

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After finding a wedding venue, there are many other important decisions to make, such as choosing photography services, a hair/makeup stylist, and florist. ***Garden Gate Florist*** in Woodstock has been a full-service florist for 28 years. Designer Allison Britt, daughter of business founder Christine Durst, has been part of the business since high school. After college, she returned to take over the wedding floral services. "We work closely with many venues in the area," say Britt. Wedding flowers usually include flowers for the bridal party, centerpieces for the reception and flowers for the ceremony. Garden Gate also offers rentals, such as arbors, concrete statuary and decorative pottery. "Our style usually has a relaxed country feel... a vintage look seems popular right now," says Britt. "And a lot of the venues around here lend themselves to that look."

Britt will sit down with a bride for a free hour-long consultation to look at pictures of her past work plus inspiration design books to get ideas of what the bride likes. Britt suggests that once the venue is chosen and the bridal party is finalized, the wedding flowers can be discussed. She enjoys working with the bride's ideas. A wedding in 2013 was one of her favorites. "There was a really great person to work with—she had such a creative mind--and we just went for it. Her wedding ended up in the online version of *Martha Stewart Weddings*." Garden Gate wedding services include free delivery & set-up, plus help buying flowers for DIY weddings.

Sharon Korsu, owner of Creative Images 4, Photography Studio in downtown Putnam has been doing portrait and wedding photography for ten years. She feels that the vibe between wedding photographer and the bridge & groom should be a positive one for it to work well. "If we are going to be spending all day with them, it really should be a good fit." If after the consultation, it doesn't seem right, she doesn't feel offended if they don't choose her.

Korsu's wedding photography services include a consultation, photography for as many hours as the couple wants at their chosen locations, an archival CD of images, and the images on a password protected website. They also offer framed prints, canvases and wedding books to display their images. A new offering is a slide-show video set to music. Korsu is very detail oriented and enjoys taking pictures of the small but important touches, such as the rings, favors, invitations, and details of the dress. She also looks for expression. "I always say the picture has to say something to me. I really go through everything so that when people turn the page it's meaningful."

Dawn Colleen Herdendorf, owner of Elegant Edge Hair Salon and Day Spa, and her staff provide the essential finishing touches for the wedding day. "We offer a unique travel service where our salon professionals will travel to an event for our guests on her special day. We specialize in up-dos, makeup, all types of manicures, mini pedicures & massage. We will travel to any location or will close our spa & salon with parties of 5 or more to make their day unique & special," says Herdendorf. "It's a good idea to contact our salon 3-6 mouths prior to their event so we can consult and meet our guest to get a feel for their needs. We also have a unique beauty package where our salon esthetician & stylist customize your hair, skin & nail routine to get you ready for their special day. "

Many other businesses in the Quiet Corner offer these important services and more. **Visit www.VisitNECT.com** for ideas. The area offers a beautiful, relaxed country setting with a variety of venues plus all the essentials one would need for the perfect wedding day.

Article photos courtesy of Garden Gate Florist.

For more information, visit:
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Liberty Highway in Putnam is known to locals as another enclave of antique homes that evokes our Quiet Corner. In its previous life, this was a ca. 1790 one room school house in Killingly and then moved to this site and added onto. Now, a 2400 SF home on 1-1/2 acres featuring updates and charm galore! The moment you walk into the entry you know you are in for a treat! Charm and great taste abound here as this home is rich in details that make a house a home. Crown molding, French doors, transom windows, wood floors and lovely colors! There are 3 bedrooms, updated baths, including a master. Formal living room is huge with central fireplace; formal dining room has many floor-to-ceiling windows. The kitchen is open to the family room and has stainless appliances, stainless and butcher's block countertop: you can just tell that someone loves to cook here! **Offered at $250,000 • View at: www.G691688.bhhsNEproperties.com**

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- Frederick Frye Rockwell, "Invitation," Around the Year in the Garden

Down to Earth Gardens

BY JENNIFER HELLER

I grew up in Alaska - where wilderness is queen and Mother Nature largely left alone. So when I moved here to the Quiet Corner, I fell in love with the gardens. The beautiful flowers, picturesque stone walls, and revolving foliage never cease to astound me. But garden nirvana is not achieved simply by plunking some flowers in the ground. One of the best Mother's Day presents I ever received came the spring after we purchased a house here in the Quiet Corner, when my husband gave me a Garden Consult with Down To Earth Gardens. I didn't know a peony from a poppy, but Lisa Withers-Richards, landscape designer identified the plants in my garden told me all about them and gave me a maintenance plan to keep them thriving.

Truly, the superheroes of a beautiful garden are Landscape Designers. Landscape design is both an art and a science and a good landscape designer must balance aesthetics, the personal preferences of the owner, the limitations of the terrain and the properties of the plants - all of this while thinking of the four seasons. I took the time to ask a few of the local designers how they work their magic and it turns out there's no magic involved - just hard work and attention to detail.

There are many reasons to hire a landscape designer. It takes a deep and wide understanding of horticulture, from grasses through flowers, shrubs, trees as well as soils, light, and moisture needs in order to select plants that not only look beautiful but live well together. Here in the land of 4 distinct seasons, the seasonability of plants is perhaps the most important facet of landscape design. Understanding how to layer plants for year round interest is a challenging and rewarding aspect to a beautiful outdoor space. Landscape designers also can create a beautiful garden in challenging terrain: most of us do not have the technical knowledge to deal with drainage issues or know how to incorporate hardscape with foliage. In the long term, a landscape designer can save you time, effort, and money. They have the skills to put the right plant in the right place...the first time.

Down to Earth Gardens

When getting ready to hire a landscape designer it is important that you think through your goals for your outdoor space. Then it helps to have an idea of the style of garden that you like. Assemble an idea file for your project, either by visiting gardens or taking pictures out of magazines. Maureen Nicholson, First Selectman of Pomfret, who is passionate about garden design although she no longer works as a landscape designer, recommends taking pictures of your property throughout the seasons, noting what you like about the current design and what needs to go. You will need to decide on the size of the project and determine your budget.

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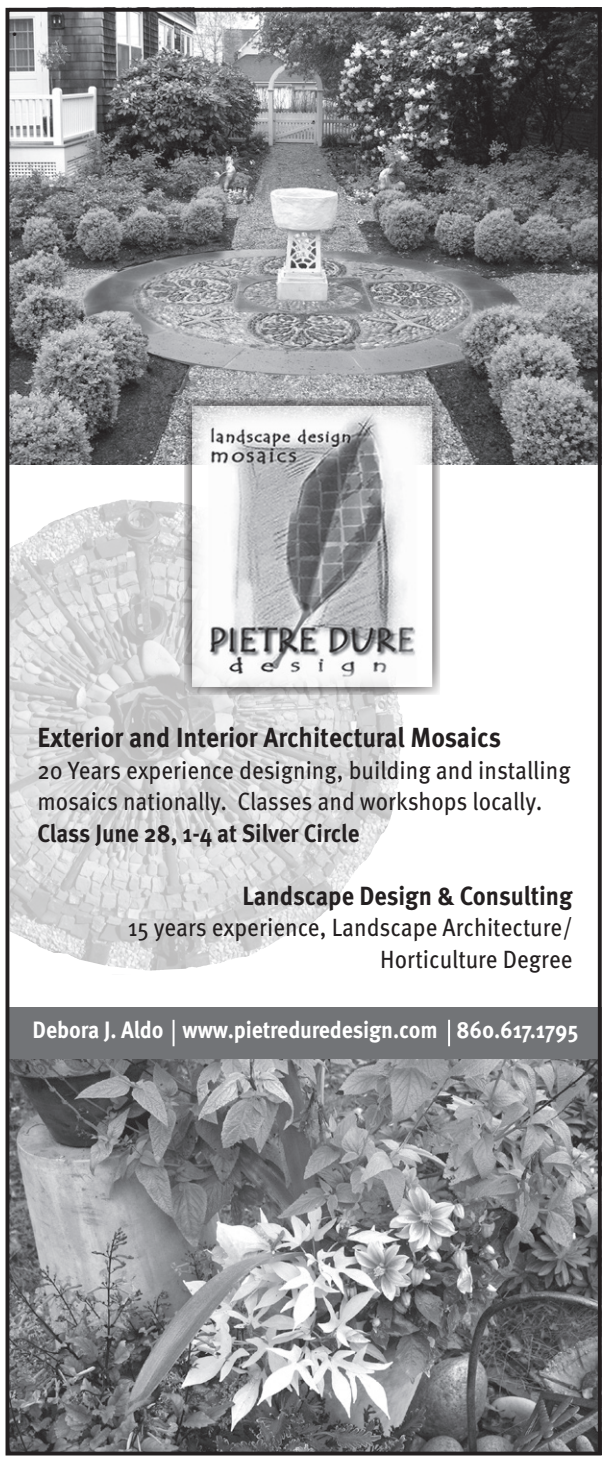

Keep in mind that you can implement a design over several years and the designer can help you stage the timing. Late spring and early fall are the prime planting times, and depending on the size of the project you may need up to 6 months of lead time when contacting designers. And it is essential to honestly determine how much time and effort you can spend on maintenance so that they can plan accordingly.

What can you expect from a landscape designer and what should you look for? It is a good idea to look at pictures of the work that a landscape designer has done to make sure that their style is compatible with yours. The credentialing for landscape designers is generally more informal than that for landscape architects but they should have some level of experience and expertise. ***The UConn Extension Master Gardeners Program*** is a

Down to Earth Gardens

wonderful resource for finding skilled gardeners who have studied landscape design - or if you are so inclined, take a class with knowledgable instructors yourself. Landscape designers can be work independently, at a greenhouse, or on a landscape contractor team. Find out what services they offer: not all landscape designers install the gardens they design, although most are happy to subcontract the work and will select the plants for you. Greenhouses who offer design services are also happy to sell you the plants and often install them as well.

Pietre Dure Designs

The first, and possibly most valuable, service they should provide is a site walk around your property: looking at the terrain, conditions, and talking through your ideas. This is generally not a free service but is well worth the money. After talking through ideas designer should draw out the plan you have agreed upon - having a visual can help you know if it is right for you. Everyone I spoke with emphasized the importance of using someone with local knowledge: both of native plants and local micro-climates. Native plantings are low maintenance, survive our winters, and add to the environment by feeding birds and pollinators such as bees.

After your beautiful garden is in place, you can maintain it yourself or hire someone to do that. Garden maintenance is different from lawn care and requires a knowledge of plants and their needs. ***Lisa Withers-Richards at Down to Earth Gardens*** passionately believes that everyone should have a garden that they love and has a range of services to accommodate all budgets. Lisa not only does landscape design and maintenance but she is an herbalist who teaches gardening crafts through the UConn Master Gardeners Extension program.

Deb Aldo of Pietre Dure Designs is a landscape architect who left a corporate job to focus on hands-on garden design and specializes in making mosaics to fit every environment. Her designs captivate and enchant, adding a focal point to contrast with the foliage year-round. Deb has designed everything from large scale landscapes to consulting on the plants that people already have. She loves the combination of aesthetics and physical work that designing demands and she derives great pleasure from creating a space for her clients that is uniquely theirs.

After each winter, the sight of flowers poking their colorful noses through the dirt is joyful indeed. A landscape designer can help you realize your garden yearnings and make each spring more beautiful than the one before.

Down to Earth Gardening - Lisa Withers-Richards at (860) 428-8209, Email: downtoearthlbw@yahoo.com

Pietre Dure Designs - Deb Aldo at www.pietreduredesign.com, (860) 617-1795, Email: deb.pietredure@gmail.com

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This is by no means a complete list of the landscape designers in the Quiet Corner, but it is a good starting place.

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Earn College Credits in Highschool at Quinebaug Middle College

"Quinebaug Middle College offers high school students one of the best educational opportunities in northeastern Connecticut," said Paul Pelletier, the middle college's Coordinator of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S.T.E.M.) programs.

BY NANCY P. WEISS

Seated at a table in Quinebaug Middle College's new, $24-million building were two Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) students, Quin Coderre, from Pomfret, and Jocelyn Wetnicka, from Brooklyn, who were eager to discuss the middle college. QMC's S.T.E.M. Instructional Coach Mary Kay Knox and Pelletier joined the conversation.

QMC is a public magnet high school that serves students in grades 9-12 from across northeastern Connecticut. Located on the campus of Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) in Danielson, QMC offers its high school students an opportunity to focus on a broad curriculum that includes Advanced Manufacturing, Allied Health and S.T.E.M. subjects. QMC students can earn free college credits from QVCC, while working toward their high school diploma at QMC. The middle college experience expands students' career pathways in an open, supportive learning environment.

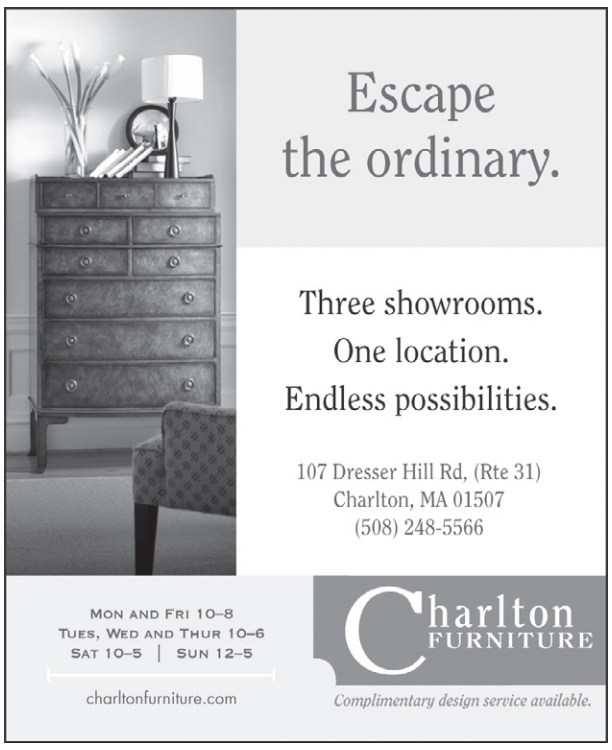
Administered by EASTCONN, QMC opened its doors to students in 2008. QMC, which is physically and programmatically connected to QVCC, operates out of a new, state-of-the-art, high-tech addition that was completed in 2014. The expansion allowed QMC to add 9th-graders for the first time. Prior to the expansion, students enrolled in their sophomore year. Currently, QMC enrolls 147 high school students.

QMC, which is essentially a high school within a college, allows students to complete state requirements for a high school diploma, while also earning college credits from QVCC. Students don't have to pay extra to take QVCC classes. The QMC curriculum, which encourages its students to chart their own educational course, is aligned with QVCC's.

For Quin Coderre, QMC offered a pathway and a personal experience that he was ready to embrace.

"When I see an opportunity, I like to take it. I saw QMC as a way to push my education further. I want a head start and that is what I am getting. I want to become an educator, probably a history or social studies teacher, and I am working toward that goal," Coderre said.

At QMC, individuality is celebrated. The program has a small student-teacher ratio with an emphasis on helping individuals succeed on their chosen educational journey. Students design their own courses of study, or pathways, as they are called, with the assistance of advisors.



High school junior Jocelyn Wetnicka wanted to jump start her education and knew that by attending QMC, she could work toward her goals and save her family and herself some of the costs of college. By the end of her senior year at QMC, Wetnicka will be more than half way toward getting the 63 credits she needs for an associate's degree. If all goes as she plans, she will be only one semester away from earning an associate's degree at age 18, when she will also have earned a high school diploma.

"I have always wanted to be a teacher, especially in elementary math, so I will need at least a college degree," she added. "By earning credits at QMC and QVCC, I will have an associate's degree, which will save a great deal."

Both Wetnicka and Coderre noted that small classes and the feeling of being part of a small, distinct school were important to them. They also enjoy the diversity of the student body and the feeling of being part of a big family. They assert that because students are close, there are no cliques or bullying.

"Students want to be part of QMC and form deeper friendships by working together on service learning projects, such as the Hoops for Hearts, an activity to benefit the American Heart Association, or Music Helps Heal, a fund-raiser we held in the monthly coffee house," Warnock said. A weekly Town Meeting, where students and faculty come together to discuss issues and opportunities also adds to the interaction and communication across all aspects of the school.

QMC functions as a democratic learning community, in which students help develop their own paths to earning their degrees, while receiving abundant support along the way. The QMC school community focuses on three principles: kindness, inspiration and respect, and tries to build character, as well as scholastic success.

Knox notes that along with the freedom to make many choices, QMC requires a lot from students. They must self-monitor, as there are fewer traditional high school organizations. There are no bells to indicate that classes are beginning or ending. The dining hall is brimming with choices. Students support each other through a program called Advisory Buddies. If a pupil is absent from school, a peer contacts them and urges them to return to the program. Parents are also urged to engage with their children in various school programs.

Library Media Specialist Donald Curtis is available to help QMC students who are taking college classes. He meets with each student to make sure they are on track with the requirements of the course work. His work is on-target, as most of QMC students taking college classes received a grade of C or better.

This year, QMC will unveil a new, 40-foot-long mobile science lab that can hold an entire class and is outfitted with sophisticated lab equipment for science experiments, both on and off campus. According to Pelletier, in the summer of 2015 there will be two free summer camps for sixth- and seventh-graders, who will be able to conduct lab work inside the mobile laboratory, nearly anywhere across the region.

To learn more about QMC go to the website at www.eastconn.org/qmc or call 860-932-4100. QMC is located on the campus of QVCC at 742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT.

For information on the summer science camp, contact QMC's Paul Pelletier at 860-932-4142 or at ppelletier@eastconn.org.

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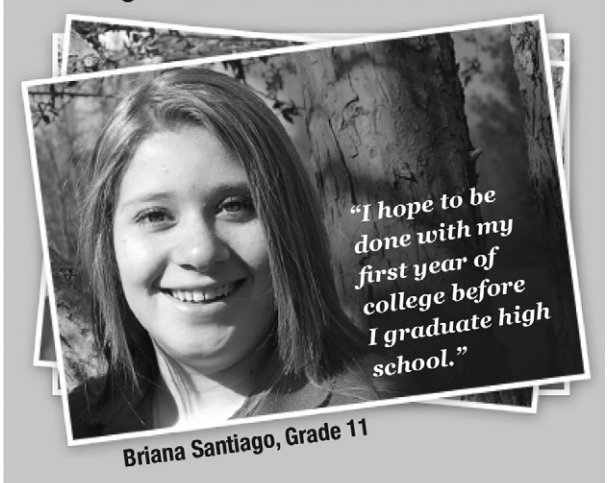

Briana Santiago, Grade 11

Students like Briana at Quinebaug Middle College pursue their career and college goals in an educational environment that nurtures and promotes academic excellence, independence and individual career interests. Students can begin earning college credits as early as 9th grade. Briana has earned 6 college credits to date and is taking 6 this semester.

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